

JUNE 1996

OPEN ARMS

VOL.8 NUMBER 6

..... MICHIANA'S LESBIAN NEWSLETTER

LAVENDER RHYTHM wants to thank the 111 womyn who attended our last dance on May 18th. It was a wonderful night to talk and dance with old and new friends. The only two disappointments of the evening were the c/d player breaking and the smoking stand/ashtray not being returned.

We thank everyone who brought in their cassette tapes so that we could finish the dance. We are planning to have a new sound system for the next dance on Aug. 24th.

We did have a few complaints regarding the ticket cost of \$7.00. We want to ensure the community that we only charge enough to cover the expenses and not to make a profit. We have listed below the expenses from the last dance. *One sad note: Since the smoking stand was not returned, we now have to forfeit our security deposit of \$350.00.*

May 18th dance **EXPENSES:**

Refreshments....\$ 40.00
 Door Prizes.....49.00
 Hall Rental.....325.00
 Hall Deposit.....350.00
 \$764.00

May 18 dance **INCOME:**

111 Womyn at \$7.00 = \$777.00
 Refreshment donation 10.00
 \$787.00

If anyone has information on the smoking stand, please write to us- -Lavender Rhythm P.O. Box 1002, Niles, Mich. 49120 **THANK YOU**



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Due to a shortage of staff members the Masthead contest is temporarily on hold. We will be putting in July's newsletter a voting ballot for the top five entries so that our readers can help select the winner. We will try to announce the winners no later than the August newsletter. Thank you for your patience.

If you would like to wish someone a happy birthday, via the calendar on the back page, send us their first name and initial of the last name and their birth date. We will print as many as we have room for.

Someone asked an interesting question: What is the geographic distribution of the Open Arms newsletter? Following is a list of cities in order from the most subscriptions to the least.

INDIANA: South Bend (43), Mishawaka (20), Elkhart (16), Goshen (5), Granger (4), Mich. City (3), Plymouth (2), Indianapolis (2), and 1 each in Bristol, Bourbon, Ft. Wayne, Kewanna, Middlebury, Napanee, New Carlisle, Rensselaer, Shipshewana, Walkerton, Warsaw, Winona Lake, and Wolcottville.

MICHIGAN: Niles (14), Cassopolis (2), Edwardsburg (2), and 1 each in Berrien Springs, Buchanan, E. Lansing, Fennville, Harbert, Kalamazoo, Laurence, St. Joseph, Sterling Hts., and Stevensville. We also have single subscribers in Iowa, Oregon, and Florida.

We've grown from 97 subscriptions to 134 in the last six months and we feel that we must be doing something right. We only wish we could get more input from our readers- - like articles of interest, reviews of local events, positive praise or censure for local merchants, and especially plans for events (canoeing, hayrides, picnics, ect.)

O.A. Staff

MICHIANA MOMAZONS



Momazons is a support group for lesbians desiring children through alternative insemination and/or adoptions and with children from marriages. We meet on a monthly basis. If you are thinking about motherhood, trying to get pregnant

or adopt, or already are a lesbian mother, you may be interested in participating in our group. We provide support, information sharing, resource options and great storytelling about our individual experiences as we pursue motherhood. Contact Momazons of Michiana P.O.Box 1002, Niles, Michigan 49120

COMMUNITY EVENTS

LESBIAN SUPPORT GROUP

Every Tuesday

7-9 p.m.

For info, write:

LSG

P.O. Box 1612

Mishawaka, IN 46544

Lavender Rhythm Dance

August 24th, 1996

Pickwick Place

219 N. 4th St., Niles

8:00 p.m. to 1:00a.m. (IN time)

\$7.00 admission at the door

Womyn only, smoking room inside, BYOB

EVENTS COORDINATORS

Third Friday Out: Sherrill and Lori 684-6913

OPEN ARMS STAFF

Suze (219)-272-3477

Kaye & Marcia (219)-271-0338

Advertising: Kaye & Marcia

Subscriptions: Kaye & Marcia

EDITORIAL POLICY

We may edit any article submitted for length or content. We ask that all articles submitted be signed and typed, but will respect the wishes of the author by not printing her name if so requested.

PLEASE TYPE SUBMISSIONS IF POSSIBLE

If it is possible for you to type your submissions on a letter quality typewriter or printer, please do so using a 55 space line. This will make layout much easier.

Thanks.

National Women's Music Festival

Bloomington, Jun. 6-9

Thursday night: Margarette Cammemeyer

Fri-Sun: Melanie DeMore, Mrs. Fun, Lea Delaria,

Ronnie Gilbert, Swagi Taiko, Linda Tillery, Dianne

Davidson, Kathryn Warner and Azucar Y Crema

Michiana Momazons

will have a picnic and meeting at Potawatomi Park Saturday, June 15. Call Laura for more information, 684-7362.

3RD THURSDAY OUT

Reggio's

1213 E. Jefferson, Mishawaka

Thursday, Jun. 20th, 6:30 p.m.

Call Sherrill and/or Lori by Tuesday, Jun. 18th for reservations at 684-6913.

All suggestions of future places would be appreciated.



1996 Whistle Stop Cafe Schedule

May 31	Rose	7:15
Jun. 7	Simeri's	7:15
Jun. 14	Martins	7:15
Jun. 21	Peddler's Pub	7:15
Jun. 28	Superior Business	6:30
Jul. 5	Crop Fire Protection	7:15
Jul. 12	IUSB	6:30
Jul. 19	Rose	6:30
Jul. 26	Simeri's	6:30
Aug. 2	Martins	6:30

Call Cityline each week for location of that week's game

674-0900 ext. 2233 or 1-800-830-2489 ext 2233.

MICHIGAN WOMYN'S MUSIC FESTIVAL

August 13-18

UP AND COMING EVENTS

Jun. 22 Michigan March for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Rights, Lansing, MI
Olivia Cruises

Jun. 25-Jul. 3, 1996 Alaska

July, 1996 The Mediteranean:
France/Spain/Italy

October, 1996 Sonora Bay: Club Med
Resort

call 1-800-631-6277 for information

FIGHTING FOR US



On Valentine's Day Assunta Femia, a self-described 49 year old working class Italian American drag queen nun, went to the post office. His innocuous visit ended with a fusillade of bullets fired at his home.

Assunta, a svelte 5'10", with golden brown eyes that are by turns intense and serene, lives in a one-gas-station town in rural Southern Oregon. Assunta ignored the familiar taunt, *Faggot!* For safety's sake, he gave the taunter a good head start, then drove home. He remembers, with a quick weary toss of the head, thinking, "Goddamn, white boys are starting early this year." Then he forgot all about the incident.

"Valentine's Day was beautiful, like spring," says Femia. "I opened the windows and doors to let Mama in." He closes his eyes and opens his arms, as if to embrace the sunlight, the warm air, the flowering trees, every bit of flourishing life around him- -Mother Nature to some, the work of a Creator to others, Mama to Femia.

Then the bullets came. Six or eight shots from what sounded like a powerful hand gun. "Certainly enough to kill someone," he remarked with uncharacteristic solemnity.

The attack was hardly big news. Voters in his county repeatedly support anti-gay ballot measures and candidates.

"If those two women had never been murdered in Medford, this would not be this important," he said, referring to the abductions and shootings last November of Michelle Abdill and Roxy Ellis, two well-loved lesbians from the next county. Uncharacteristically, deputies interviewed the townspeople, and a sergeant videotaped Assunta's statement to use as a law enforcement training tool.

Assunta Femia was born in "a little coal camp" in Holden, West Virginia and moved at 12 to South Philly. By 14 he was walking picket lines with the Congress of National Equality. He graduated from parochial school and entered a Carmelite order to prepare for the priesthood. Was he out? "I would never have done that. I was such a good Catholic child." Femia laughs, demurely lowering his eyes.

"But the Vietnam war was happening. I had to really make a statement about the war." He did two and a half of a five year term in the Federal prison in Kentucky for civil disobedience. "You see this queen before you? It took some doing to keep *this* inside, believe me. Then I fell in love with a *big* white bank robber from Altoona and had to deal with my sexuality on the spot." He moved to San Francisco and, nineteen years ago, he was drawn to the climate of spirituality in Southern Oregon.

The Sheriff's Department has told Femia that although the perpetrator is known, no one is willing to testify. "I'm the only witness. But I don't mind. I never thought it would get this far!"

He raves about the community support he's received. "Once these dykes and queens got hold of this in Southern Oregon, they were like pitbulls." People besieged the Sheriff's office with phone calls.

The verbal harassment continues to be a nightmare. "It's horrifying, but I have inured to it since I was five-years old. I want this to be a paradigm shift in the sheriff's office. I want those white boys over there & some who ain't to know that queer people, no matter what you may think of them, deserve the same protection as anybody else, and if we're getting hassled because we're queer, then we deserve more protection."

Assunta Femia explains simply, "This is what nuns do - - our nuns - - fight for us."

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COURT OF FRIENDS

SINGLES

O.K. all you singles! Here's your opportunity to reach out to other singles. Write out what you want other singles to know about you, what you are looking for in another (be brief), and send to:

The Court of Friends

P.O.Box 1281

Niles, MI 49120

(Be sure to include your address.)

Your identity will be assigned an ID number. Your info and ID number will be published in OPEN ARMS. (It would be helpful if you would send your info early in the month so that it can be published in the next month's issue.) Also, O.A. reserves the right to edit, if necessary, for publication.

Those wishing to respond to an ID Single may do so by writing whatever you wish, putting it in a stamped, sealed envelope with the intended ID number on the front (in pencil). Place your message in another stamped envelope and mail to the above P.O.Box.

Upon receiving your message, the ID number will be replaced with the corresponding name and address and mailed. Then you're on your own. *COME ON SINGLES! Someone special wants to know you're out there!*

51 I'm 27 yr. old SWF who is employed, educated, faithful, sincere and interested in developing a true friendship/relationship. I'm looking for a woman 21 to 40, who enjoys dancing, movies, swimming, camping, social drinking and much more.

Please write, I would be very glad to hear from you.

52 I am a 51 year old GWF who is fairly new to area. Attracted to somewhat feminine women. I am a sensitive, honest, compassionate person with a great sense of humor. Am interested in meeting new friends and possibly that "special someone".

53 Hey lady, you got the love I need. Maybe more than enough. I'm lonely, but happy. 26, blond, 5'2", blue eyes, 140 lbs, labor carpenter. Love kids, animals, flowers, music and women. Play guitar, drive my car, camping, fishing, party down. No drugies or bi-sexual. Lonely? Write Me!



I am enthusiastic! What a wonderful, brilliant, delicate, strong, and beautiful energy I am.

... Louise L. Hay

—MTV's *Singled Out* will make dating game history this June when it finds a female date for a woman contestant and a male date for a man. The show, which is MTV's most popular, will air this same-sex episode in conjunction with New York's Gay Pride Week.

—*Curve*—info from Lesbian Connection

—The Swedish press was thrown into a frenzy when that country's top female rock star, Eva Dahlgren, 35, outed herself when she applied for a license to marry her girlfriend. One in seventeen Swedes owns Eva's 1991 album "THE HEART OF A FADED BLONDE." She is popular elsewhere in Scandinavia as well, and her coming out revived the stalled discussion of legalization of gay marriage in neighboring Finland. Sweden, along with Denmark and Norway, allows lesbians and gays to marry under registered partnership laws that guarantee all the rights of marriage except church weddings, adoption, artificial insemination and in vitro fertilization. —*Outlines*

Dear Egeria,

Do you believe there is life after death? I recently lost my best friend to cancer. She was a fantastic person and everyone she knew hoped and prayed she would not linger in agony. I watched her day after day, suffer horribly. Now I am afraid of my future death, and I feel angry because prayers were not fulfilled! I am very upset! I need information and advice, and no one seems to understand.

Dear Sister,

Thank you for your question, but thank you more for the loving support you gave to your friend. Prayers, positive thoughts and loving comments give the recipient an inner glow, knowing they are cared about and loved. Your feelings of grief and anger are normal. I regret your needs have not been fulfilled yet. Continue talking and crying as you need. Write down your feelings as a further healing release. Grief support groups may offer you much.

Beliefs regarding death and life after death vary according to individual philosophy and religion. Mahatma Gandhi said, "One is a part of the whole and the whole is a part of the one". Many lessons are learned through painful experiences. The child may hear the word "hot", but has no comprehension of the definition until "hot" actually stimulates physical pain, and the lesson is strongly remembered. Throughout the life pain is a great teacher, if we listen. Perhaps, the greatest lessons, the greatest mysteries within our human universe, are revealed as natural death approaches, and perhaps, what we observers perceive as horrible suffering may be the struggles of the "sufferer" as they move down the pathway toward enhanced pleasures. People who have returned from death or near death experiences, speak about a tremendous, loving power they meet on their journey.

I have watched many people move on. Several smiled, talked to, and reached for something that was not visible to me. Consequently, I know positively, there are two aspects of life after death, and suspect a third, the soul or spirit, likely exists and moves on after death.

In science class we may have learned, that all living things contain energy, as our teacher attached wires to a potato and a light bulb. The light bulb shined, and within our selves we gained a lesson and energy from the teacher, and a simple potato. That simple potato, taken from its

natural form, exerted energy and then gradually changed to a different form. The energy within human bodies is demonstrated in many medical tests, including the electrocardiograph as electrodes and wires attached to our body carry the electricity from our heart to the machine, which records the heart's condition.

A fallen tree feeds Mother Earth nutrients which feed other life forms. Insects, plants, humans and many others carry on the life and energy from the fallen tree, and the seeds planted by all energy (negative and positive) continue the cycle of life.

Perhaps, the star that you observed last night may have fallen from the sky later. Is it now gone, simply because it is out of your sight? It may gather with many other stars to create a new sun, moon, planet or perhaps contribute to the parcel of earth you may stand upon tonight as you gaze to the heavens.

As death approaches, the energy within all living things prepares to move on. Until our body and mind relaxes and accepts death, I believe that energy moves about, struggling to find an exit. As "pain" increases and death comes nearer, our physical body releases pain killing endorphins in greater quantity, as it has in varied levels throughout life. Finally, death arrives and we simply shed a shell (our physical body) we no longer need. Perhaps, the next song we hear a songbird sing is a part of the released energy, or that energy may gather into a form that aids us through our next journey.

Your grief is a natural process and the joy and love you shared with your friend is now and forever a part of the positive energy within you. Your friend, thus, is still with you. I urge you to live your life as best you can, be nourished and share that energy in a continual loving and positive manner. **Today is a gift, that is why we call it the present.**

.....Egeria (woman advisor) will address your concerns. You will remain anonymous.

Egeria
P.O.Box 1281
Niles, MI 49120

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WHISTLE STOP CAFE

After four games, we are 3 and 1. That one loss was a squeaker and our players have vowed to beat them next time.

The first game was a win by forfeit. If you will remember, the weather was unbelievably cold. None of our opponents showed up, but our faithful fans did.

The second game started with rain, cleared, then ended in rain. It was a triumphant 10 - 0 victory for Whistle Stop Cafe.

Game three was cold. So cold! A few fans, though faithful, resorted to watching, and cheering, from their cars. This is just one more opportunity to meet new friends. Ask them to join you in your car....conserve fuel, you know. Back on the game, we lost 14 - 11. The night was cold, but Connie was hot, 3 runs and 2 doubles. Wow! Our team played well and are just getting up steam to be sure and win next time. We know they will.

Game four was so exciting. Our wimin played great against IUSB, a not completely anticipated victory. Infield was awesome, outfield did their job right. Lori made a double play...out at second, threw to first...out! Woody pitched well and caught a "hit-back-at-her" that we could hardly believe.....like a shot. She got her wimin out as they ran for first, too. Great catches from Julie and Mona in outfield, making this 3 wins and 1 loss.

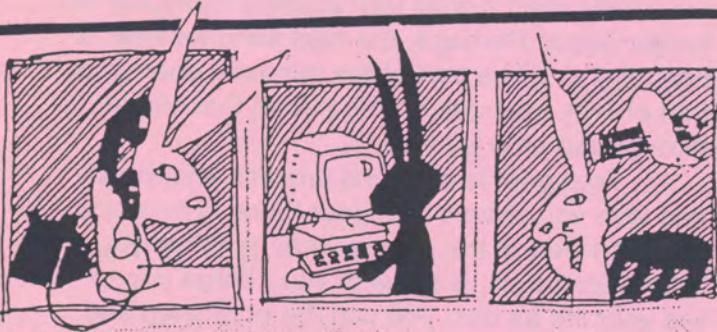
It was helpful having Laura as official scorekeeper. She called out expected ball placement by hitters, which proved very beneficial.

Next game will be against Rose. Hope to see you all there for our very special action.

-Staff Reporter

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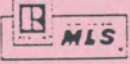
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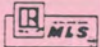
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June

1996

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

						1
2  MARI	3  best wishes KAYE	4 Support Group 7:00 p.m.	5	6 happy birthday KELLEY 	7	8
9 Open Arms Meeting 6:30 p.m. FATHER'S DAY	10	11 Support Group 7:00 p.m.	12	13	14	15
16	17	18 Support Group 7 p.m. Reservations Due for 3rd Thursday Out	19	20 Third Thursday Out 6:30 p.m.	21	22
23  Birthday wishes to Laurie	24	25 Support Group 7:00 p.m.	26	27	28	29
30						

Subscription to Open Arms - \$10.00/year

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Make checks payable to Open Arms and mail to:
 P.O. Box 845, Mishawaka, Ind. 46546
*Open Arms exists to disseminate diverse information of interest to
 the Michiana lesbian community.*

OPEN ARMS DEADLINE/MEETING

The deadline for submissions for the July newsletter is June 10th. Submissions received after June 10th may not be published in the July newsletter. Mail submissions to *Open Arms*, P.O. Box 845, Mishawaka, IN 46546 or give to any staff member.

Newsletter Meeting June 9, 6:30 p.m. For information
 271-0338